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OLD

TO THE

MUSEUM

[Price One Shilling]

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O D E
TO THE
M U S E S.

*Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ
Accipiant.-----* VIRGIL.

Μῦσων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰδεῖν,
Αἰθ' Ἑλικωνος ἐχέσιν ὄρος μέγα τε, Ζαθεὸν τε.
HESIOD.

By Mr. W O D H U L L.

O X F O R D :

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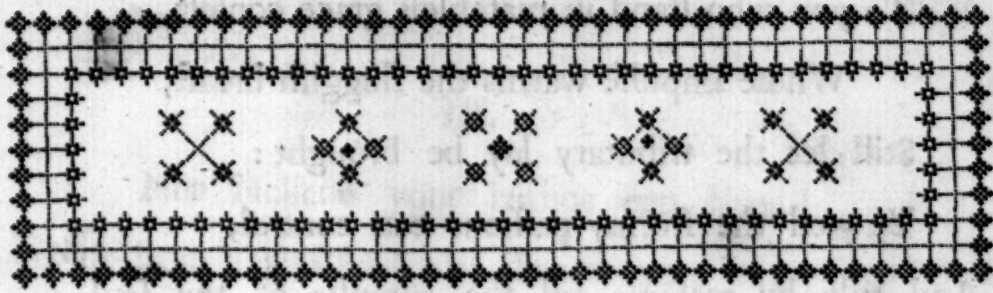
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O X F O R D





O D E

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I.

CELESTIAL Maids my vent'rous Song inspire;
While, to your praise attun'd; I strike the votive lyre.

Again reſorbent ocean's wave

Receives the waters which it gave

From thouſand rills with copious currents fraught;

To

To you who stand in matchless grace confest,
Whose impulse warms the sluggish breast,
Still let the tributary lay be brought :
Ye well the stormy passions can control,
And rule by reason's aid the tumults of the soul.

II.

Your all-creative pow'r was shewn,
What time Pirene's magic draught
Exalted Homer's thought ;
Those artless numbers giv'n by you alone
While sung the bard ; unstudied and untaught :
His genius drove him on to fame ;
No learning quench'd the kindling flame,
Nor por'd he o'er the dull scholastick page ;
But with poetick rage,
(The books of nature, and of man explor'd,)
With unfeign'd wings he boldly soar'd.

Nor

III.

Nor Helicon your realms can bound,
Nor from Parnassus only, beams your ray,
In ev'ry region are ye found,
And on Cimmerian darkness pour the day.
Hence Pindar sung amid Bæotian plains;
To erring man this maxim to infuse,
" That to no local laws confin'd
" The genius of a noble mind
" Superior still, its force innate retains:
" All climes, and every soil, the good, the great, produce."

IV.

Arcadian lawns no more your steps invite,
On Mænalon no more ye rove,
Nor midst Idalia's fabled grove,
Nor in Athenian porticos delight;
Nor by the banks which Mincius laves,
Where Liris rolls its gentle waves

Nor

Nor in proud Rome's majestick structures dwell:
In fullen silence Tiber glides,
And views along his winding fides
In evil hour uprear'd, the monkish cell:
Black Superstition, bath'd in human gore,
With all her ghastly troop sits brooding on the shore.

V.

Expell'd by Gothick arms from your once lov'd retreat;
In quest of liberty ye fly,
To tyranny your aid deny,
And find in western climes a happier feat;
Where Albion's chalky cliffs o'erhang the main,
From your immortal mansions ye descend,
On Glory's blazing car attend,
And grace fair Freedom's train.

VI. Like

VI.

Like the huge Alps' stupendous height
If Homer's mighty numbers please;
As Arno's blooming vale attracts the sight,
If Virgil shines with elegance and ease:
We here behold in one great bard, combin'd
With native genius, a well cultur'd mind,
In Milton's lofty flight;
Above the beaten track who dar'd to rise,
Left the low earth, and sought his kindred skies
Of empyreal light.
To aid whose towering theme ye deign'd t' impart
The Grecian fire, conjoin'd with Roman art.

VII.

If Aristophanes with Comick pen,
Describ'd the vain pursuits of men;
Or Terence knew the gentler part
To captivate the willing heart.

To the bold numbers of the Tragick lore
If Sophocles could raise his buskin'd song;
Bid Pity drop the sympathizing tear,
 Bid the bosom freeze with fear,
 With unrelenting anger burn,
Or to despair the hidden frenzy turn:
 And with heroick tales of yore
 Arouse the gazing throng;
 Displaying thus with grateful praise
The deeds of warlike chiefs in ancient days;
How o'er the checker'd stage of life they trod,
What made Ulysses great, or Hercules a god.

VIII.

Let us of Albion's happier shore,
Low at your fane our thankful homage pay,
 Exulting hail th' auspicious day
Which to our favor'd isle immortal Shakespear bore.
Of bloom unfading round his honor'd head
Your variegated wreaths are spread:

Now

Now with unaffected wit
 Through Fancy's airy realms he strays,
 And now in vulgar life's ignobler ways
 Draws the rude clown, or mercenary cit.

IX.

Now his sad scenes expand the source of woe,
 And teach our streaming griefs to flow:
 Now tell how * civil strife and factious rage,
 Distain'd chaste record's whiter page;
 Or how great Henry's vengeful lance
 Humbled the crested pride of France,
 With arms triumphant shook the haughty state,
 And rear'd his banners in their vanquish'd land;
 Or how (O strange reverse of fickle fate!)
 Our blasted trophies shrunk beneath a † woman's hand.

* Wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster.

† The Maid of Orleans. See Shakespear's First Part of Henry the Sixth.

X.

When Boreas rages o'er the field,
Mark how the pliant osiers yield;
Where'er the winds impetuous guide,
Now lye they prostrate on the land,
Now dip their heads beneath the roaring tide :
While yon strong oak erect remains,
'And unsubdu'd their empty threats disdain,
Firm rooted in the strand.

XI.

When Latium groan'd beneath imperial sway,
When rul'd Oppression, and while Freedom bled,
Thus tun'd each bard his abject lay,
And grac'd with venal wreaths * a tyrant's head :
Midst the contagion of the times,
When Nature shudder'd at enormous crimes,

* Octavius Cæsar.

Yet Juvenal with keen fatirick rage
Display'd the dangers of the state,
Nor spar'd the vices of his canker'd age,
Nor meanly stoop'd to sooth the follies of the great.

XII.

While in contempt neglected Science lies,
Audacious Vice all law disdains,
And while pedantick Dulness reigns,
In Truth's and Virtue's cause see Pope arise:
Tho' in mild numbers flow'd his tuneful strain,
To Folly and to Vice a foe,
He boldly aim'd the vengeful blow,
Nor brandish'd Satire's pointed shafts in vain:
The wise, the good, how willing to commend,
To Virtue only, and her friends a friend.

XIII.

If * Syracusia's bard with Dorick reed
Once sung of festal plains,
Of beauteous nymphs, and constant swains,
And lov'd his goats, and tender sheep to feed;
While in sweet melody he rolls along
The pure simplicity of song,
Well may he claim the poet's laurel meed:
Now we view his shepherds laid
Beneath the cool sequester'd shade
Where buds the fragrance of yon myrtle grove:
While wildly browse their bleating flocks
Wandering o'er the pathless rocks
Where mantling moss surrounds the lucid rills,
Or o'er the flow'r-enamell'd meads they rove,
While zephyrs whisper from the pine-topt hills.

* Theocritus.

XIV. In

XIV.

Like his were Thomson's rural lays,
In glowing tints his vivid scenes he drew,
While thro' the circling year he strays,
And all its various seasons rise to view;
Now warbling Philomel complains,
And vernal bloom bespreads the smiling plains.
Next Summer's torrid suns intensely blaze,
Fierce Sirius darts his baleful rays;
Then mellow Autumn swells the ripening blade;
At length old Winter comes in hoary robes array'd.

XV.

High on the summit of yon sacred hill
With forests thick begirt your temple stands;
There ye rove in wildest measures,
With the silver-footed Pleasures,
Your tuneful voice th' obedient flute commands,
Each changing theme symphonious accents fill:

While

While suppliant at its base I bend,
The wafted harmony descends;
In speechless ecstasy I gaze around,
Notes divine I seem to hear,
Sweetest musick strikes my ear,
In wonder lost I pause, and catch the mimic sound.

XVI.

Hark the shouts of battle rise;
The clash of arms, the hissing shafts I hear,
The din of conquest, mingled cries,
Rage leads the van, and Terror forms the rear:
The God of War with stern disdain
Surveys the crimson field,
He drives exultant o'er the slain,
Grasps his swift lance, and shakes his brazen shield;
The recreant squadrons, seiz'd with instant fear,
Fly from his flaming sword, and lightning of his spear.

XVII. Whence

XVII.

Whence the proud victor with triumphal joy
Leads his gay pomp, we turn our eye,
Awhile forget the blast of fame,
And own compassion's juster claim;
More doleful scenes our thoughts employ,
Where stretch'd in dust those bleeding warriors lie,
While hovering o'er the vulture wings his way,
Growls the grim wolf, and waits his nightly prey.

XVIII.

No longer now with cares distrest
My wearied spirits sink to rest,
Beneath the covert of some gloomy shade,
Where skirting poplars bound the opening glade;
Where stately elms support the curling vine,
Or climbs the flaunting jessamine,
Seated on the leafy spray
The feather'd songsters chant their quavering lay;

Sloping hills at distance seen,
 Meadows cloath'd with waving green:
 Here, sportive riv'lets o'er the flowery ground
 In wild meanders gently glide,
 And there, with hoarse rebellowing found
 The torrent foams adown the mountain's craggy side.

XIX.

From the tall brow of that romantick steep,
 Beneath whose sedgy caverns Neptune lies
 Circled with sea-born deities,
 On the calm surface of the azure deep
 I view the Nais rise;
 Down their smooth necks the sable ringlets flow,
 The zoneless vest as loosely trails behind,
 They tread majestically flow,
 Then in the shelving grotto fit reclin'd:
 O'er the light strings their volant fingers move
 Accordant to the songs of love:

“ How

“ How at Nature’s infant birth,
“ When from Confusion rose the teeming earth,
“ From their parent ocean sprung
“ Venus, goddess, fair and young:
“ The God of battles caught her wanton glance,
“ With the eager flame oppress’d,
“ Unbound his helmet, dropt his glittering lance,
“ And in her Cyprian bow’rs the yielding fair carefs’d.”
As the sweet sisters tune the melting strain
They feel the lambent fire;
In their warm bosoms pants the fierce desire,
And thrills in ev’ry vein.

XX.

Hence as I roam along the desert heath,
And press with tardy feet the ground,
Solemnly tolls the midnight dirge of death,
I stop; and tremble at the sound:
Entering now that mould’ring pile,
I traverse o’er the lonesome isle;

Scarce the faint tapers shed their drowsy light;
E'en full-orb'd Cynthia feebly gleams,
And in the dark abyfs of night
Impending clouds refract her iffuing beams.
As here unheard, unpitied, and alone,
To the deaf walls I vent my plaintive moan;
At length responsive to my sighs
The boding screech-owl hoots his difmal cries,
And from their yawning tombs the pallid fpectres rife.

XXI.

Since early Fancy firft began to dawn,
Oft have I fought the filent grove,
Oft trac'd the mazes of the lawn,
If in thofe haunts perchance ye deign'd to rove;
Oft at your fhine my fervent pray'r addrefs'd,
And pour'd thefe dictates of a feeling breaft;
" Hear me, I cry'd, and elevate my heart
" With your poetic fire;

" Teach

“ Teach me to chuse the nobler part,
“ Pleas’d in your solitary seats to live;
“ To strike with energy the lyre,
“ And taste those pleasures ye alone can give.
“ Far from the glare of pomp, where giddy strife
“ Mixes the bitter cup of woe,
“ To where the purer joys of life
“ In an even channel flow
“ Conduct my steps; I follow, and obey,
“ Thro’ paths where Science leads, and Nature points
the way.”

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"I teach me to change the noble part
"I teach in your former part to live;
"To live with charity the part
"And take that pleasure in those can give
"Far from the place of work, where such life
"Makes the heart of work
"To make the heart of life
"In an even change of
"Change of life; I teach and give
"This is the noble science of life and Nature's part

THE END